

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus that includes
5 service modules for performing system side processes on
image formation, wherein applications can be added to
the image forming apparatus separately from the service
modules, the image forming apparatus comprising:

an application launch part for referring to
10 launch selection information indicating at least a
location that stores one or more applications, and
launching the one or more applications from the at
least a location according to the launch selection
information.

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2. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
20 claim 1, the at least a location is at least one of a
hard disk device, a recording medium removable from the
image forming apparatus, a computer connected to the
image forming apparatus via a network.

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3. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, the image forming apparatus further
5 comprising:

a part for displaying a setting screen for
setting the launch selection information on a display
part of the image forming apparatus, and storing
information input from the setting screen as the launch
10 selection information.

15 4. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the application launch part launches
the application by referring to information on the
application.

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5. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 4, wherein the information referred to by the
25 application launch part is address information of the

application.

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6. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the application launch part determines
whether the application is installed at the location
according to presence or absence of predetermined
10 information on the application, and the application
launch part launches the application if the application
is installed at the location.

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7. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, wherein the application launch part refers to
setting information including information indicating
20 whether a predetermined application is to be launched,
and the application launch part launches the
predetermined application if the setting information
includes information indicating the predetermined
application is to be launched.

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8. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
5 claim 1, wherein the application launch part refers to
setting information including information indicating
applications to be launched, and the application launch
part launches the application indicated in the
information.

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9. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
15 claim 8, the image forming apparatus further
comprising:

a part for displaying a setting screen for
setting the setting information on a display part of
the image forming apparatus, and storing information
20 input from the setting screen as the setting
information.

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10. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 1, the image forming apparatus further comprising
a virtual application service that operates as a client
process for the services modules and operates as a
5 server process for the applications,
wherein the virtual application service
includes the application launch part.

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11. The image forming apparatus as claimed in
claim 2, wherein the image forming apparatus receives
an application from the computer connected to the image
15 forming apparatus via a network by using a http
protocol or a ftp protocol, and the application launch
part launches the received application.

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12. A computer program for causing an image
forming apparatus to launch an application, wherein the
image forming apparatus includes service modules for
25 performing system side processes on image formation,

and applications can be added to the image forming apparatus separately from the service modules, the computer program comprising:

application launch program code means for
5 referring to launch selection information indicating at least a location that stores one or more applications, and launching the one or more applications from the at least a location according to the launch selection information.

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13. The computer program as claimed in claim
15 12, the at least a location is at least one of a hard disk device, a recording medium removable from the image forming apparatus, a computer connected to the image forming apparatus via a network.

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14. The computer program as claimed in claim
12, the computer program further comprising:

25 program code means for displaying a setting

screen for setting the launch selection information on a display part of the image forming apparatus, and storing information input from the setting screen as the launch selection information.

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15. The computer program as claimed in claim
10 12, wherein the application launch program code means launches the application by referring to information on the application.

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16. The computer program as claimed in claim
15, wherein the information referred to by the application launch program code means is address
20 information of the application.

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17. The computer program as claimed in claim

12, wherein the application launch program code means
determines whether the application is installed at the
location according to presence or absence of
predetermined information on the application, and the
5 application launch part launches the application if the
application is installed at the location.

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18. The computer program as claimed in claim
12, wherein the application launch program code means
refers to setting information including information
indicating whether a predetermined application is to be
15 launched, and the application launch program code means
launches the predetermined application if the setting
information includes information indicating the
predetermined application is to be launched.

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19. The computer program as claimed in claim
12, wherein the application launch program code means
25 refers to setting information including information

indicating applications to be launched, and the application launch program code means launches the application indicated in the information.

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20. The computer program as claimed in claim 19, the computer program further comprising:

10 program code means for displaying a setting screen for setting the setting information on a display part of the image forming apparatus, and storing information input from the setting screen as the setting information.

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21. The computer program as claimed in claim 20 13, wherein the application launch program code means receives an application from the computer connected to the image forming apparatus via a network by using a http protocol or a ftp protocol, and launches the received application.

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22. A computer readable medium storing
5 program code for causing an image forming apparatus to
launch an application, wherein the image forming
apparatus includes service modules for performing
system side processes on image formation, and
applications can be added to the image forming
10 apparatus separately from the service modules, the
computer readable medium comprising:

application launch program code means for
referring to launch selection information indicating at
least a location that stores one or more applications,
15 and launching the one or more applications from the at
least a location according to the launch selection
information.